

ANTS, FLIES, AND RATS CAUSING NUISANCE AT TAYSIDE HOSPITALS

By Elliot Smith, 2 Jan 2016, thetele.co.uk, Dundee, Scotland

Creepy crawlies and roaming rodents are among the many pests causing a nuisance in hospitals and care facilities across Tayside.

Details released by NHS Tayside in response to a Freedom of Information request have documented pest control incidents across the last two years.

NHS Tayside has a local pest control contract in place and is called out to deal with outbreaks of pests as they occur.

The total cost associated with the services of the outside pest control agency between 29 November 2013 and October 7 2014 was £67,124.94.

From November 1 2014 to November 9 2015, costs had dropped substantially to £16,003.20.

The spend from November 2013 to October 2014 included £40,000 of “proactive spend”.

This included measures such as the installation of nets to remove rabbits and seagull nests, and the purchase of electronic fly killers.

It is hoped the implementation of these preventative measures will reduce spends in the future on a long-term basis.

A spokeswoman for NHS Tayside said: “It is important to note that our records show what is reported to the pest control company at the time of call-out and not necessarily what is found when they attend the site.

“NHS Tayside has more than 135 premises across the region and in each there are procedures for dealing with pest control problems.

“Whenever a member of staff identifies any type of problem, no matter how small, our pest control contractors are called in straight away.

“All reports are dealt with as a matter of urgency to ensure there is no escalation of any problem and incidents are resolved quickly and effectively.

“This ensures there is little or no impact on clinical services.”

Among the most common intruders were ants, wasps, flies and silverfish.

But there were also callouts involving rabbits, dead bats and pigeons, woodlice, ladybirds, rats, mice, seagulls and, in one case, a dead fox.

In one recorded incident, pest control services responded to a report of a seagull attack.

At Ninewells Hospital alone, there have been 301 separate incidents reported that have required pest control experts to be called to the scene.

The infestations have sprung up in a range of locations within the hospital, but many occurred on wards, in kitchens or in offices.

In November alone there were 10 calls to Ninewells Hospital — mainly to wards where there were infestations of flies or silverfish.

Pest controllers also had to deal with wasps on 12 different occasions throughout October and November — at locations including Dundee Dental Hospital, Royal Victoria Hospital and Kings Cross Hospital in Dundee.

They even had to deal with a bird that was trapped in a stairwell at Ninewells Hospital in October.

Some of the callouts were to fix or replace equipment designed to keep pests at bay.

Councilor Ken Lynn, Dundee City Council’s health and social work convener, said: “Ninewells is quite an old hospital now.

“Building work began in the 1960s so it may just be a case of the building showing its age.

“Infestations are inconvenient, sure, but I have every faith in the NHS staff at the hospital, who deal with these types of issues swiftly and efficiently.”

Ants are a common pest at hospitals like Ninewells.

